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NEWS RELEASE

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EXHIBIT FEATURES HISTORY OF UM MASCOT

MISSOULA —

The University of Montana has a long tradition of school spirit, and one important symbol of that spirit over the years has been the UM mascot -- always a bear, but not always the fur-costumed ball of energy we know today as Monte.

An exhibit tracing the evolution of UM's mascot is on display in the lobby of the University's Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library through October.

The timeline of the display of mascot memorabilia, created by Teresa Hamann of the library's K. Ross Toole Archives, begins in 1897, when a live bear cub traveled with UM's football team, then simply known as the "bears." UM's football team was renamed the Grizzlies in 1923.

The exhibit moves through the numerous live bear cubs who served as University mascots, first named Teddy, then Fessy and finally, in the 1960s, Cocoa.

UM's costumed mascot during the 1980s, dubbed Otto, donned a variety of fun-loving outfits to entertain crowds at Grizzly football games, Hamann said.

It wasn't until 1991 that UM's mascot became known as Monte, short for Montana.

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“During Homecoming in October, UM alums will have an opportunity to take a stroll down memory lane through the exhibit,” said Donna McCrea, head of archives at the library.

But even with information from the archives, University Relations and the Adams Center Hall of Champions, McCrea said the library doesn’t have a complete history of UM’s mascot.

She is asking University alumni, staff, faculty members and others to search their scrapbooks and UM treasure troves to help build the library’s collection of photographs, newspaper clippings and other items that document mascot history.

To donate items or photographs, call McCrea at 406-243-4403 or e-mail donna.mccrea@umontana.edu.

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